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REVIEWS

Kaolin of Indiana. By W. N. LOGAN, State Geologist. Indiana State Dept. of Conservation, Bull. No. 6, 1920. Pp. 131, pls. 43, maps (colored) 7.

Beds of kaolin occur at several horizons at or near the top of the Mississippian formation in several counties in southwestern Indiana. One important horizon is at the contact between a Chester shale (below) and a Pottsville sandstone (above). All the beds are beneath a sandstone and above a shale. There has been only a slight commercial development of the deposits to date, in spite of the presence of large quantities of high-grade white clays. The report discusses (1) the physical and chemical properties of Indiana kaolin; (2) its geological conditions of occurrence; (3) its origin; and (4) its uses. It also gives (5) its geographic distribution by counties.

Dr. Logan's study of the origin of Indiana kaolin has disproved earlier explanations. Laboratory experiments and microscopic examination have shown that this kaolin is due to biochemical action, an origin not before suspected. It was found that under proper conditions in the laboratory, sulphur bacteria secrete kaolin. In nature, sulphur bacteria obtain sulphur from the iron pyrite in the shale. The sulphuric acid which is formed, attacks the aluminum in the shale. The resulting compound reacts with the quartz of the sandstone, and the sulphur is replaced by silica, producing kaolin.

As kaolin in southern Indiana is being actively formed today by sulphur bacteria where the average annual temperature is 50° F., it is inferred that the kaolin deposits of the Tuscaloosa, Wilcox, and Lafayette formation of southern states were formed under similar temperatures. During the glacial epochs, some such average temperature doubtless occurred in the Gulf states.

S. S. V.